



CONNECTICUT VETERANS & MILITARY COALITION

c/o Officers and Enlisted Club of Connecticut, 360 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06105

Good morning Senator Abrams, Senator Maroney, Representative Borer and members of the Veterans Affairs Committee.

I am Dan Thurston, Chair of the Connecticut Veterans and Military Coalition.

I am here today to speak on behalf of the Veterans and their families of this State with regard to several bills that are being considered in this Legislative year.

Not all of us that have served this nation fully comprehended the road that we were going to travel. We were born in to an era, a 14 year window, when we will have the choice to serve in the Armed Forces of United States of America. Having made the choice to serve... we accept our responsibilities, we take the oath not always fully comprehending the fact that we may never return home. We serve as directed, we serve at the geographical location performing the assigned duties and doing it 24-7.

Those that have served Honorable in the Armed Forces deserve the respect of the citizens of this state and the nation that we have served to protect.

We are in support of **Bill No. 801** to provide Expanded Veterans' Access to Public Assistance Programs.

Bill No. 5563 should provide knowledge to Judges related to Mental Health and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that will allow them to help Veterans involved in The Criminal Justice System.

Not only is it important to recognize the issues that returning service members have from deployment but also to support programs and services that can provide a path back to the community. To restate an old saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Due consideration should be given to the benefits of reducing cost for fishing and other sports activities. Programs that provide veterans the opportunity to participate in sporting activities and more importantly associate with other veterans has been beneficial to veterans returning to the community.

Bill No. 802 to provide Discounted Fishing Licenses for certain Veterans is a positive step in that direction.

Bill No. 7062 to permit the dependent child of a veteran to receive a tuition fee waiver gives recognition to the families of those that have served. They earned it... and we support this initiative.

Bill No. 6977 addresses an important issue for Veterans' Charitable Organizations. Veteran's organizations are funded by their members and through their efforts in fund raising events as well as contributions from the community. All of the monies are returned to our community, to help Veterans and their families in need, as well as students looking to further their educations. We are all volunteers and contribute both our time and incurred expenses for travel in support these activities.

All Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and Military Service Organizations (MSOs) that are incorporated in Connecticut have to pay a \$50.00 annually incorporation filing fee. For many VSOs and MSOs this can be a significant portion of the cash flow for the year and impact their ability to help the veterans of Connecticut. We recommend support of Bill 6977.

As a side note: Unlike Businesses and Corporations, some VSOs and MSOs were chartered 100 years ago and change officers every year. It would be helpful if the Secretary of the State office accommodate these differences.

BILL NO. 7064 - AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES



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I am the veterans' service contact person and a volunteer for a small community. I heartily support Bill 7064 to permit volunteers to serve veterans in their communities.

BILL NO. 777 - AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF VETERANS' TAX ABATEMENTS.

I question the need to study tax abatements to veterans in the state.

The original statutes that granted property tax deductions for veterans was enacted following WWII and was set at \$1,000. At that time the cost of a home for middle income families was in the range of \$4,000 to \$10,000. Considering the states need to minimized expenses, this legislation should move forward with the recommended abatement proportionally adjusted to the current cost of homes in Connecticut. If I remember correctly, cars were less than \$2,000. Today... a car cost more than my parents first home in 1955.

On behalf of the Veterans of Connecticut and their families, I thank you for your time to allow me to express our views and for your commitment to the Veterans and Citizens of Connecticut. This concludes my testimony and I am available for any questions you may have.

Respectful Submitted,

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